(b) if so, the *modus-operandi* discussed between the member countries to run the said proposed Airline?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) The proposal for setting up an airline jointly run by Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand has been initiated by the Thai Government. No details have been worked out so far.

Linking of Bangalore-Pune N.H. to Bangalore-Chennai N.H.

890. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bangalore-Pune National Highway is being linked with Bangalore-Chennai National Highway;

(b) whether the State of Karnataka has urged the Union Government for assistance; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Two estimates amounting to Rs. 11.60 crores and Rs. 14.40 crores, with sharing on matching basis between Central Government and State Government have been approved; *i.e.* widening and improving existing single lane state road to double lane from Dobbespet on NH-4 with Devanahally on NH-7 and Attibele on NH-7 *via* Hoskote on NH-4, respectively.

[Translation]

Allotment of out-of-turn Gas Connections

891. SHRI VINAY KATIYAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have allotted any out-of-turn L.P.G. connections during the last six months;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the basis on which these connections were allotted?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. During the last six months 755 LPG connections were released on out-of-turn basis. These connections have been sanctioned to blind persons on the recommendations of various Associations/Organisations of the blind persons, individuals on their request, and recommendations from VIPs and public representatives including MPs and ex-MPs in urgent and deserving cases at the discretion of the Government.

[English]

Kerosene

892. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a large quantity of Kerosene is diverted to be sold through certain petrol pumps in Bombay;

(b) if so, whether the profits made through this kerosene diverted for adulteration purposes is distributed among the persons involved therein;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) There is no such information with the Government and Government does not have any information about the sharing of profits of such diverted kerosene among different persons.

However, a study made, about three years ago, by a consultancy agency, had indicated diversion of kerosene at different points particularly through wholesalers for the purpose of adulteration and sale in black market, etc. Central Government has taken a number of steps to check diversion and adulteration, and as retail distribution by whole-salers, where mostly diversion takes place, is the responsibility of State Governments. They have also been advised to rationalise the system of distribution and to plug loopholes to prevent diversion and adulteration.

Literacy Percentage in Rajasthan

893. COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Literacy percentage of males & females in Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jalore districts of Western Rajasthan is the lowest in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Union Government have given large amount to Rajasthan Government for eradication of illiteracy;

(d) if so, the amount allocated during the last three years;

(e) whether the Government have chalked out any programme and fixed the time by which 100 percent T.L.C. will be achieved; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The districts of Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jalore, as per the 1991 Census, figure amongst the district having the lowest literacy rates in the country. The details are as follows:

District	Literacy rate		
	Total	Male	Female
Barmer	22.98	36.56	7.68
Jaisalmer	30.05	44.99	11.28
Jalore	23.76	38.97	7.75

The reasons for low literacy rates in these areas, *inter alia*, could be attributed to difficult geographical conditions of the area, lack of physical resources, scattered population resulting in inaccessibility to schools, lack of literacy tradition/movements, considerable gender bias against women, low social/political commitment to the eradication of illiteracy, diverse socio-cultural factors, etc.

(c) and (d) The National Literacy Mission have launched total literacy campaigns in the entire State of Rajasthan. The details of Central grants released for these projects, during the last three years, are as follows:

Year	Amount (Rs. in lakhs)
1994-95	1745.00
1995-96	1681.76
1996-97	1304.62

(e) and (f) The NLM's objective is to make 100 million non-literates in the age-group 15-35 years functionally literate by the year 1998-99 and bring about full literacy by the year 2005 A.D. Under the total literacy campaigns, which is the principal strategy of the NLM for eradication of illiteracy, 430 districts have so far been covered throughout the country.

[Translation]

Utilisation of River Water

894. SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI : Will the Minister WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts made by the Government for proper utilisation of river water;

(b) the achievements made by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the Union Government have failed to utilise the river water; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : (a) to (d) Since the beginning of the First Five Year Plan a number of irrigation and multi-purpose projects have been taken up to utilise the river waters for irrigation and other purposes. As a result of this, the irrigation potential of the country which was about 22.6 million hectares during the pre-plan period has increased to about 89.0 million hectares at the end of 1995-96.

The National Water Development Agency is carrying out studies on the National Perspective Plan for water resources development which, *inter-alia*, envisages transferring water from surplus to water-short basins by inter-linking of rivers and constructing reservoirs at potential sites to maximise the utilisation of river waters. However, full utilisation of river waters is not possible due to various reasons such is topographical environmental constraints etc.

[English]

Facilities to meet Tourists Inflow

895. SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI :
DR. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA :
SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :
SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has set a target goal of 50 lakh tourists by the turn of the century;